

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0081/02

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Theodorus Bouwman, on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs  
to the Council

Subject: Social dialogue: tripartite social summit

The social dialogue and the quality of industrial relations are at the centre of the European social model. At the Stockholm, Laeken and Barcelona European Councils, the Heads of State and Government, the social partners and the Commission emphasised the role of the social dialogue in meeting the Lisbon goal of a competitive European Union based on quality, full employment and social cohesion.

The social partners presented an important contribution to the Laeken European Council aimed at reinforcing the concertation between social partners and European institutions on economic and social policies. The Laeken and Barcelona Summits endorsed the approach to create a structured form of concertation at the EU level, which has already been tried out at a number of summits.

In its Communication on the future of the European Social Dialogue (COM(2002)0341/final), the Commission recommends the establishment of a new Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment, bringing together the troika, the Commission President and a delegation of social partners and replacing the Standing Committee on Employment, to provide for continuous concertation between the Council, the Commission and the social partners in order to contribute to the various components of the integrated economic and social strategy launched in Lisbon.

The European Parliament has already endorsed this idea on a number of occasions. The recent Commission proposals to streamline the policy coordination cycle makes it even more urgent to put such a new structure in place well in time for the next Spring Summit in Athens.

1. How does the Council intend to follow up the decisions already taken by the Heads of State and Government in this field, in order to guarantee that a Tripartite Summit is established before the end of the year?
2. Does the Council intend to ask for the consultation of the European Parliament on the tasks and operational aspects of the Summit and to take proper account of Parliament's opinion?

Tabled: 22.10.2002

Forwarded: 23.10.2002

Deadline for reply: 13.11.2002